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# HOW TO WIN AT



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1230 Avenue of the Americas, New York, N.Y. 10020

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For information address Pocket Books,  
1230 Avenue of the Americas, New York, N.Y. 10020

ISBN: 0-671-46749-2

First Pocket Books printing December, 1982

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

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# Introduction

THE OFFICIAL How To Win At ZAXXON will teach you everything you need to know to help you go from "Rookie Pilot" (beginning or average player) to "Combat Ace Pilot" (high scorer, surviving enemy attack) in the unique video game called Zaxxon.

With its three-dimensional screen, authentic fighter control stick and realistic flight sound effects, Zaxxon gives space games a new and fantastic perspective. An exciting combination of design and technology has produced an instrument panel complete with an illuminated fuel gauge and a working altimeter. And Zaxxon's engineers even went so far as to build in firing buttons that are separate from the trigger on the flight control stick—just so your hand won't tire out from hitting the trigger so much!

The basics of Zaxxon are simple, but the action never stops. As a Zaxxon pilot, you use the control stick to maneuver your space ship just like a real fighter pilot would—up, down, banking left or right.

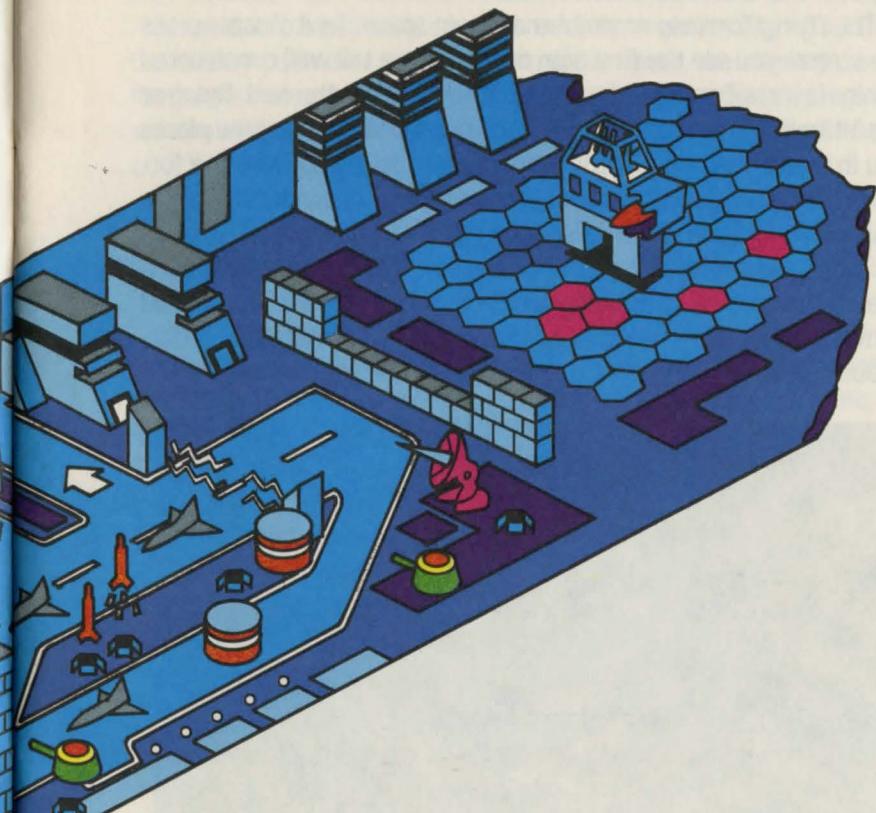
The object of the game is to score as many points as possible while surviving the enemy attack. Imagine yourself the pilot, attacking the enemy's floating fortress. Flying over the terrain, you strafe enemy targets to score points. The enemy counters with a barrage of missiles and rockets. Then you face a fleet of enemy fighters in a grueling dogfight of altitude strategy and flying skill. After the air battle, another floating fortress—defended with a new obstacle, the laser barrier—awaits your jet. Finally, you've earned the ultimate challenge: a fierce confrontation with the enemy's armored robot and its lethal homing missile.

Learning how to play Zaxxon takes time and patience. As a beginner, you should use the first few games just to learn how to pilot the fighter jet. Once you've mastered the basics, you're ready to become the envy of the video game world—a "Combat Ace Pilot." THE OFFICIAL How To Win At ZAXXON will show you how—with hints and tips from the game's creators and best players.

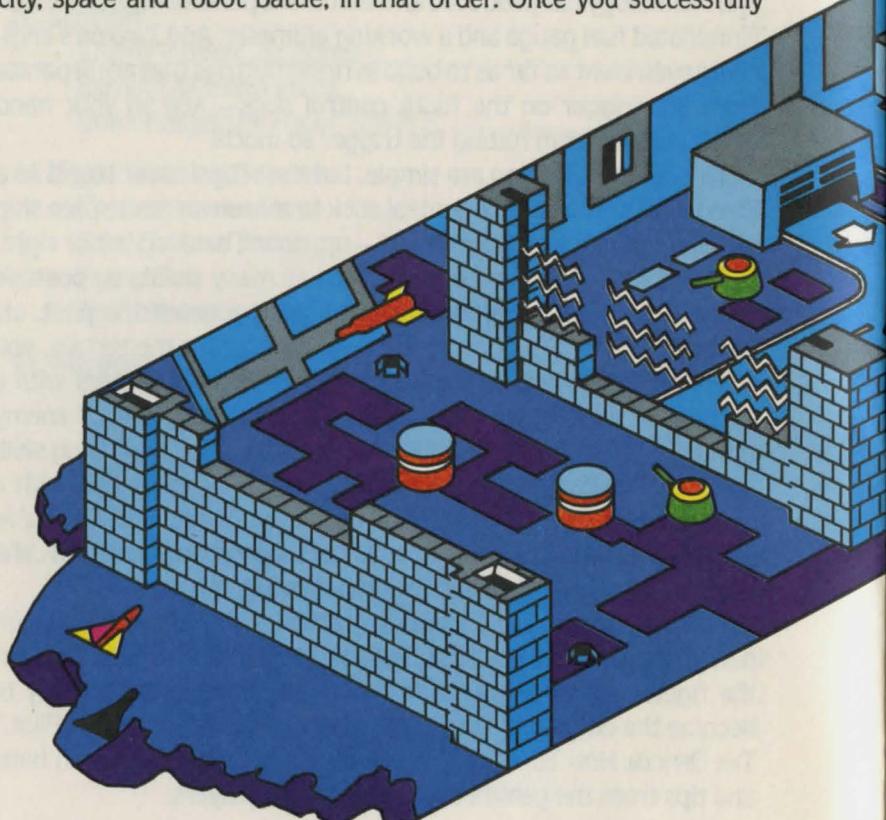
## The Three-Dimensional Screen

The game's three-dimensional effect is produced by displaying the different scenes at a slant, or three-quarter angle. You therefore look at the moving images from a vantage point above and to the side of the floating fortress.

The game is divided into as many as 18 rounds. Each presents a city, space and robot battle, in that order. Once you successfully



complete a round, the obstacles and defenses become more difficult to overcome in the next one.



### City Scene

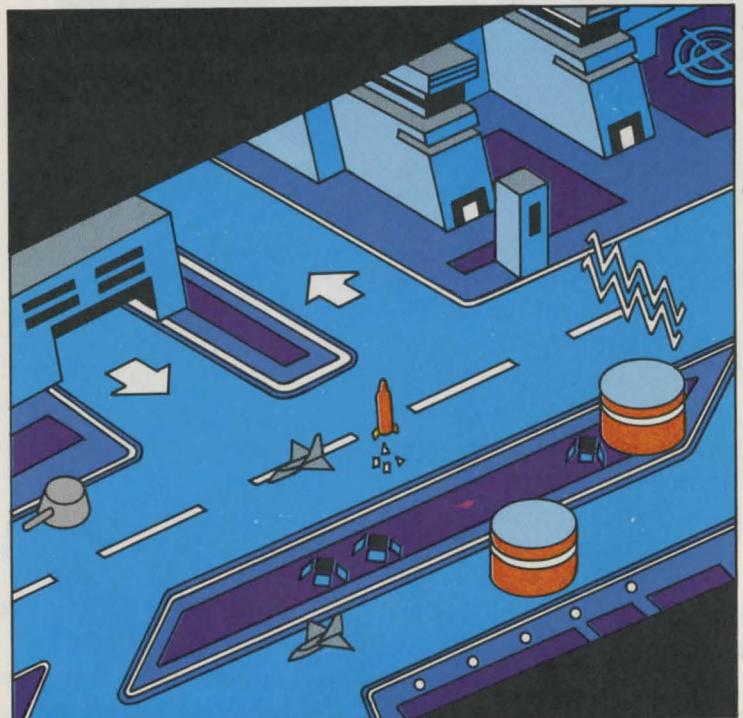
Each round begins with your jet flying alone in open space for five seconds, accompanied by Zaxxon's "space wind" sound.

Then a large slab, resembling a rock, enters the screen from the right. On the slab is Zaxxon's floating fortress. Because of the

three-quarter angle of the screen, you feel your jet is actually flying over and then into the fortress.

The flying fortress resembles a city in space. As it floats across the screen, you see the first sign of alien life: a tall wall constructed of nine layers of rectangular bricks. Your jet nears the wall, flying at top altitude. (This is one of the few times when the machine places you in a safe position.) At top altitude, your jet can fly into the fortress. Two rows of blocks are left out of a part of the top of the wall, creating a passageway into the city.

Once inside, the real challenge begins. The enemy fortress is heavily guarded by various defenses on what resembles an airfield runway. There are cone-shaped openings that contain the underground missiles. Grey ground cannons fire from in front of your jet;



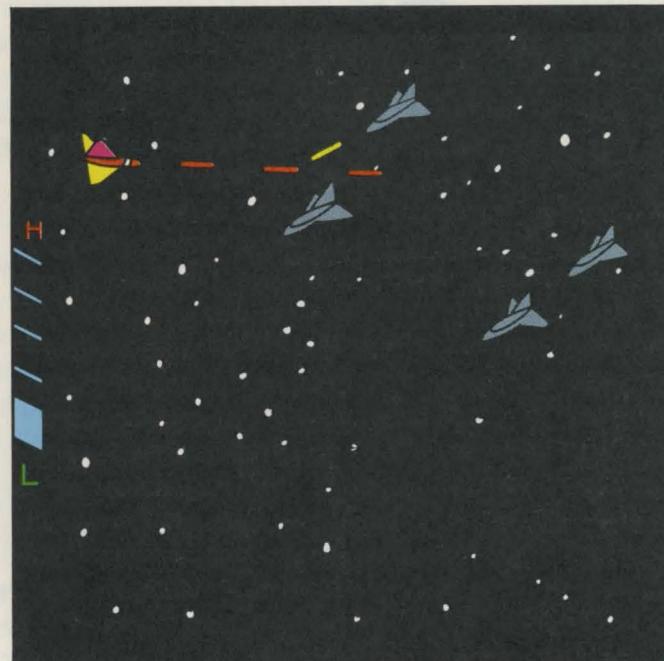
green cannons fire from either side. Brick walls block your path; in later rounds, "laser barriers" must also be navigated.

You start to score points as you move through the city, attacking the enemy positions. You shoot at airplanes on the runways, red fuel tanks and radar antennae. (For the point value of these targets, see the chapter on Scoring, page 12.) In addition, blasting a fuel tank provides fuel for your flight.

After your challenging trip through the fortress, you fly over one last wall. The city floats to the left and off the screen.

## Space Scene

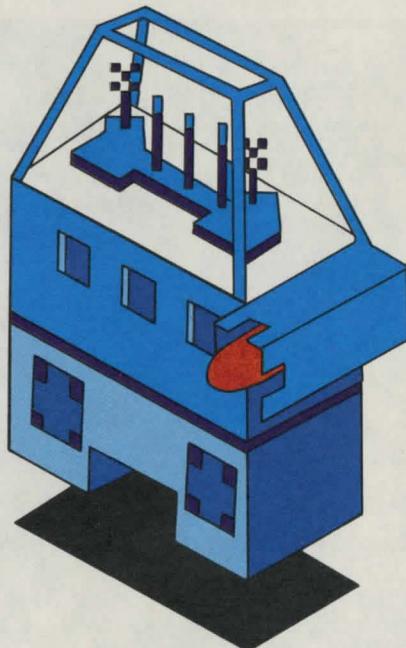
Once again your jet is flying alone in the darkest regions of deep space, but after only a few seconds, stars and planets appear. This is the beginning of the second part of the round. Enemy jets appear



from the right, flying towards you. They swoop, dive and fire projectiles at you. As they move up and around they get larger or smaller, maintaining Zaxxon's three-dimensional quality.

## Robot Scene

If you survive the attack of the enemy's fighter jets, you're ready for the third phase. Climbing over another brick wall, you enter the robot base. This looks a lot like the original floating fortress—there are brick walls, missiles and cannon defenses, fuel tanks and radar screens. But this time it's harder: you have to fly between the brick walls and the laser barriers overhead. The enemy fire increases. But if you make it over the last brick wall, you get to battle the deadly armored robot.

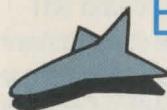


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The fortress stops moving. The armored robot enters from the right, carrying a "homing missile" under its left arm. You must hit the homing missile not once, but six times!—or it will destroy you.

These three phases—floating fortress, enemy jet attack and robot base—make up one complete round of Zaxxon. Each time you successfully complete a round, you are given a more difficult one, with smaller openings in the wall, and more brutal enemy attack.

## Enemy Fortifications



**Ground Planes** 50 points—These grey planes are placed randomly on the enemy's runway. In the opening rounds, they're easy to hit since they don't fire back. But in later rounds they fire red rockets which can destroy your jet. You get 50 points for each plane you hit, plus another advantage: As explained in the chapter on Scoring (see page 12), each plane you hit counts toward the number you need for the 1000-point bonus.



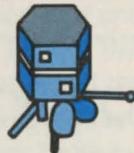
**Enemy Fighter Jets** 100 points—During the first round, these jets are grey. After the first armored robot attack, and in the remaining rounds, they're yellow. Destroying these aggressor ships is an artful battle of skill and depth perception—you and the enemy must be at the same altitude. (The secret to conquering the enemy jets is found in the Advanced Flight School chapter, page 23.)



**Grey Cannons** 200 or 500 points—The grey cannons, which are randomly located in the fortress, will face you head on and fire red rockets at you. If you get them, you'll score 200 or 500 points.



**Green Cannons** 200 or 500 points—The green cannons are located on either side of the fortress. They shoot broadside at you. (For tips on how to avoid their rocket fire, see the chapter on Flight Training School, page 14.)



**Satellite** 300 points—The satellite appears during the second part of each round, the enemy fighter fleet attack. Flying overhead from right to left, the satellite moves at Zaxxon's maximum altitude. It's easy to spot, because it looks like a blue and white striped tin can.



**Radar Towers** 1000 points—Remember: The radar towers are Zaxxon's most valuable targets. And because they're stationary, they're easy targets as well. They're red, and resemble the classic disk-shaped radar devices still found on the planet Earth.



**Fuel Tanks** 300 points—Just like in any other city, there's a fuel shortage in the fortress. But, there are no long lines at the gas station. Located in several places in the fortress are fuel tanks. They have red walls and a blue top. (They look like those above-ground swimming pools found in the suburbs.) Blow them up and you get 300 points and a fuel supply. When the tank blows up, the screen shows a little explosion.



**Homing Missiles** 200 points—In Zaxxon, there are two ways to attract a homing missile. If your jet flies over the fortress at a high altitude, a red homing missile enters the screen, headed for your plane. If you fire six rockets and hit the missile with each one, you continue to play. If instead you miss, the homing missile destroys you.

The homing missile also enters the screen during the lethal armored robot scene. If the robot is not destroyed after it enters the screen, it releases a homing missile aimed at your jet. Again, you have to hit the missile six times to survive.



**Armored Robot** 1000 points—The armored robot is the final enemy you encounter in the fortress. Floating along on a "beehive" pattern, the robot enters—prepared to destroy you with a homing missile. If you blow up the missile *before* it's released, the armored robot explodes, giving you 1000 points. (But if the robot fires at you first, remember that you must then hit the missile six times to win this battle.)



**Interceptor Missiles** 150 points—These rise to Zaxxon's highest altitude from craters in the fortress—and then explode. Because these interceptors are so unpredictable, you must be ready to dodge them at any given moment. You'll be given a warning: Just before a missile rushes out of the crater, a small cloud of smoke billows out. Steer your jet away from the cloud, and you'll be safe. And if you can hit one of these missiles with a rocket, it's worth 150 points.

## Scoring

Fuel Tank	300 points
Interceptor Missile	150 points
Grey Cannon	200 or 500 points
Green Cannon	200 or 500 points
Ground Plane	50 points
Fighter Jet	100 points
Radar Tower	1000 points
Satellite	300 points
Homing Missile	200 points
Armored Robot	1000 points
Destroying All Enemy Fighter Jets	1000 points

*Note:* On most Zaxxon machines, scoring 20,000 points earns a bonus plane.

### Enemy Fighter Jet Bonus

In Zaxxon, there are three different ways to earn 1000 points: Blowing up a radar tower, destroying the armored robot and destroying all the enemy fighter jets. (The secret of how to destroy the enemy fighter fleet is found in the chapter on Advanced Flight School, on page 23.)

For scoring, keep in mind that you must destroy 20 fighter jets to earn the bonus. Since each jet is worth 100 points and the bonus 1000 points, a good player can pick up an easy 3000 points. The trick with the bonus is that any ground planes destroyed before the

actual dogfight count towards the 20 needed for the bonus. For example, if in the first part of the round you destroy four ground planes on the surface of the floating fortress, once the dogfight with the fighter jets begins you need only 16 more kills to earn the bonus. (To make it easy, Zaxxon prints out the number of planes still needed for the bonus in the lower right hand corner of the screen.)

### Earning an Extra Plane

Most machines can be adjusted to change the number of points needed to earn an extra plane. On most Zaxxon machines, a player earns a bonus plane for getting 20,000 points. (By the way, most video machines can also be adjusted by the arcade owner to give you either three planes or five for your first quarter.)

### Don't Forget the Radar Tower

Many beginning players forget that each radar tower is worth 1000 points. It's so easy to get caught up in destroying fuel tanks, jets and cannons, that the radar screens are often overlooked.

Of all the individual enemy fortifications, the radar towers are worth the most and appear quite often. Since they don't attack your plane, you could choose to ignore them. But when you're cruising through the floating fortress and you have a choice between a fuel tank or the radar tower—take the radar! It's worth more than three times the points of a fuel tank. (Later we'll see how "combat ace" pilots use the art of strafing to hit almost *all* the enemy fortifications on the board.)

And remember—if your score is nearing the 20,000 points you need for the bonus plane, you can always sweep down and look for a few radar towers. Destroying a couple of those is usually worth enough extra points to get you the bonus plane.

## Flight Training School

Welcome to Flight Training School. As in the United States Air Force, first you have to learn how to fly the jet before you can become a combat ace.

In previous chapters, you were told what the enemy's fortress looks like, and how many points each enemy fortification is worth. Now it's time to learn about the controls—and how to take the controls. In Flight Training School, we teach you the basics—how to fly, survive and begin scoring points.

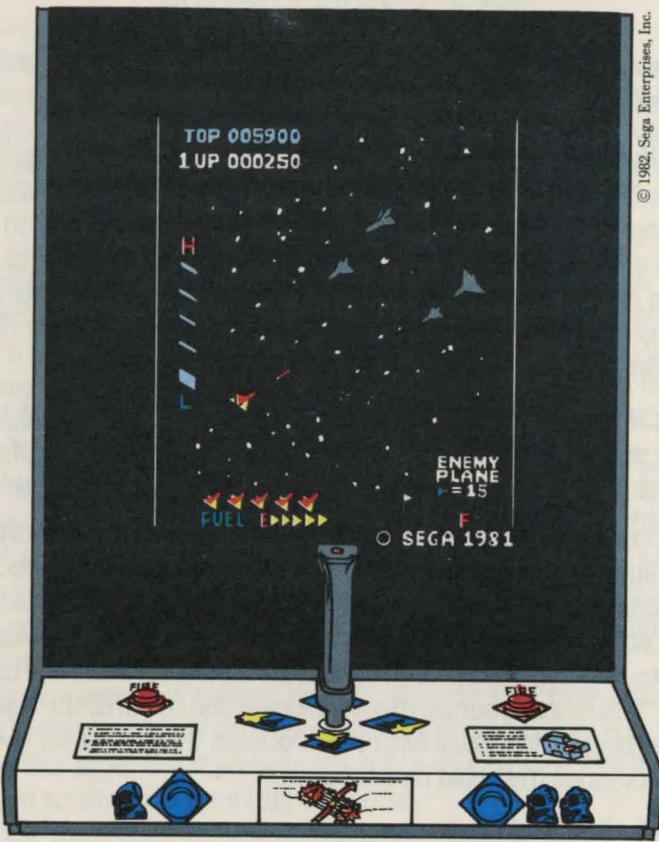
### The Instrument Panel

To be a good pilot, you must know your plane as well as you know yourself. Let's get familiar now with the controls and gauges you'll find on your jet.

**The Three-Dimensional Screen.** By watching the screen you'll trace your jet's path through the flying fortress, through space and back into the fortress where you'll combat the armored robot.

**The Altimeter.** This is located on the left side of the screen, and measures the height of your jet in its flight. It will aid you in clearing the walls, for example, if you remember to glance at it after your first successful clearance: If when going over a three-tiered wall the altimeter registers two units up from the lowest altitude, the next time you approach a three-tiered wall you will know to raise your jet until the altimeter registers two units—then you can clear the wall safely.

**The Fighter Control Stick.** In the middle of the instrument panel is your fighter control stick (also called the flight control stick). It has a trigger for firing at enemy targets; also, on either side of the stick are firing buttons.



**Sound Effects.** Be ready for flight and combat sounds like "space wind" and the roar of missile launchings.

**The Fuel Gauge.** Across the bottom of the screen is a fuel gauge. Running from "empty" to "full" is a series of yellow triangular markers which disappear as you use up fuel. If you blow up a fuel tank, a yellow marker reappears, indicating that you've earned extra fuel. (It is possible to run out of fuel, but this very rarely happens.)

## Basic Ground Training

Flying straight into the fortress is simple. Once inside, though, the real challenge begins.

**The Dive.** Since most of the enemy fortifications are on the surface of the floating fortress, your jet must get close to the ground. By pushing the flight control stick forward, the jet “dives” to the surface. *Don’t worry about crashing.* Unless you smack into one of the enemy fortifications, your jet won’t crash into the surface. Once on the ground, you move the flight stick right or left to direct your jet towards the targets.

**The Climb.** At times when your jet must fly over the tall brick walls, pull straight back on the flight control stick. The nose of your jet will point upward, and soon you’ll reach the highest altitude.

**Banking, Right and Left.** Part of this game’s attraction is its realistic flight. You can swoop down while strafing enemy targets, like a veteran pilot would do. For example—you’ve just cleared the brick walls, and up ahead on the right is a cluster of fuel tanks. It’s time to bank right. Push the flight control stick forward *and* to the right. This causes your jet to swoop down and towards the right. If you’ve been firing away with your rockets, the fuel tanks (worth 300 points each) should be destroyed.

## Flying Time

**The Red Homing Missile.** Beginning players seem to fly only at the higher altitudes. And for good reason—it’s safe up there. At that height, your jet can’t be hit by the enemy’s ground forces. So what does the enemy do? It sends up a red homing missile, straight towards your plane. Once the missile is on the screen, you have two choices. Either fire and hit it six times to destroy it, or dive at the last second to avoid it. If you choose to fire, and do hit it, you score 200 points. But remember—it’s a moving target and hard to hit.

By diving at the last second, on the other hand, you can usually avoid the homing missile.

Of course, the best way to avoid the homing missile is not to let it enter the screen. (Besides, how can you earn any points if you’re not in position to attack the enemy?) Dive down as soon as you’re inside the fortress. Keep low, and you’ll never see that homing missile—until you meet the armored robot.

**Finding the Altitude.** Because of Zaxxon’s three-dimensional effect, you’ll need good depth perception to guide your jet through the fortress. At first you may be disoriented and crash into a wall or enemy target. To hit an enemy target—whether it’s a fuel tank or a plane—you must be at the same altitude it is.

Finding your altitude can be very simple. Just keep firing. If you’re nearing one of the many brick walls, fire at it. If your shots hit below the opening in the wall, pull back slightly on the flight control stick. Fire again. If your missile still hits the wall, keep climbing. Eventually, your shots will go over the wall and your plane will be at the same altitude as the last shot you fired. By maintaining your altitude, you can fly over the wall.

Another method of estimating your altitude is to take a quick look at the black shadow under your jet. The closer your jet is to the surface, the larger the shadow is. It’s only a rough guess, but it can help even advanced players stay on course.

But the most accurate way to judge your altitude is to use the altimeter described on page 14. Relying on the altimeter, though, is best left for more experienced pilots. (The Advanced Flight School chapter tells you how to use the altimeter. See page 23.)

**Hurdling.** In the center of the fortress are low walls made up of two rows of bricks. As your jet approaches the wall you must choose between two methods of attack, and a quick glance at the enemy fortifications ahead will tell you which method to choose. If most of the enemy targets are located near the side of the fortress,

you should try to fly around the wall. Keep in mind that some of those enemy targets will be firing red missiles. So as your jet swoops around the wall, hit your firing button to destroy any targets in the immediate area.

The second method of getting over the wall is called "hurdling." Since these particular walls are low, it just takes a gentle touch on the flight control stick to perform the hurdling maneuver. All you do is pull back slowly on the stick, just enough to clear the wall. (Remember, keep firing until you see that your shots are clearing the bricks!) As soon as you see that you've cleared the wall, ease the stick forward to bring the jet back down to the surface. Now you're back in position to fire at enemy targets.

Hurdling has the added advantage of getting your jet over the wall without losing your good attacking position. Often, high-value targets like radar towers are placed just on the other side of obstructions like walls or laser barriers. Once you've mastered the hurdling method, the low walls and laser barriers are no longer a problem.

**Basic Enemy Fighter Attack.** During the second phase of each round, the enemy attacks you in a vicious dogfight. You must destroy these interceptor jets in a battle designed to test your patience and skills. The battle takes place in deep space against a background of stars and tiny planets. But don't spend much time stargazing! As soon as the stars appear, the enemy jets fly onto the screen and launch their attack.

Beginners are easy prey for the enemy fighter fleet. Just like in the floating fortress, your jet must be at the enemy's altitude when you fire to score a hit. Depth perception is also a problem in deep space. The enemy jets not only fly towards you, but they can quickly dive and climb to change altitude. The trick here is to be aware of the size of the enemy jets. If they are small, you must dive to get down to their altitude. Large enemy jets, on the other hand, are at higher altitudes. Quickly draw back on your flight control stick before firing at these.

And how do you know when you're at the right altitude for firing in deep space? There are a number of ways, but for beginners it can be difficult. The trickier methods are taught in the chapters on Advanced Flight School and Combat Ace School (see pages 23 and 28). Here in Flight Training School, you must master the basics first.

The dogfight with the enemy fighter fleet is the hardest part of Zaxxon. Even expert players may lose a few planes here. Beginners can do one of two things. Either keep your jet at maximum altitude (keep pulling on the fighter control stick) or at minimum altitude (push forward on the stick). If you're at the highest altitude, wait until the enemy jet is the same size as your plane. It'll resemble your jet, with a white bubble for a cockpit. Fire a steady stream of missiles, and you'll destroy the enemy. (Remember that since you're at the same altitude, he'll think your jet is an easy target, too!) He'll be firing his red missiles. If you see one, bank left or right to avoid it.

The same method is used at minimum altitude. Here, though, it's harder to hit the enemy because the plane appears smaller on the screen. Just keep firing a rapid series of missiles.

If a group (or "squadron") of enemy jets appears, keep firing. Pull or push on the stick, but *now* direct your jet to the left or right towards the squadron. This way, your rapid fire can hit a few of the enemy's fleet.

**Green Ground Cannons.** The green ground cannons that fire across the center of the screen will attack you rapidly. Beginners must learn a maneuver or two for dealing with these cannons.

**The Leap**—As you fly through the center of the fortress, two green ground cannons present a good challenge. They shoot a crossfire from either side. If you try to blast away at one of these cannons, you'll most likely get hit by the other's fire. So—it's time for the leap. (At this point, don't be greedy for every possible point on the screen. As in all video games, patience is rewarded—and greed kills.)



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Look at the green cannons in the diagram, and pretend that there's one of those low walls between them. By using the hurdling method, you'll clear the enemy's cannon fire. And by getting back down to the surface quickly, you'll be ready to hit other targets.

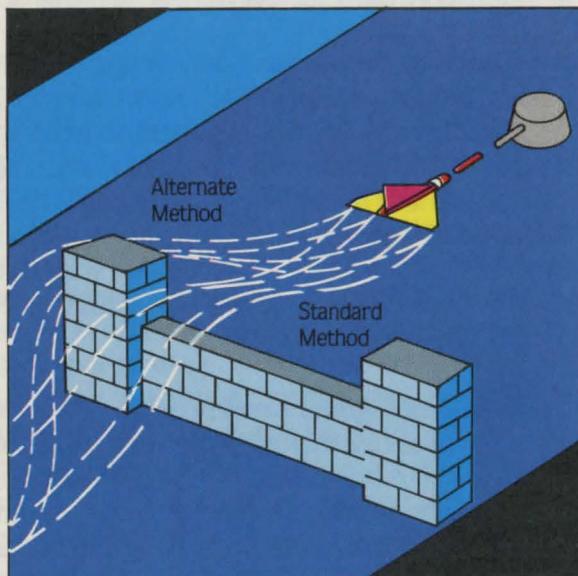
**Bank Left**—Two green cannons are located three inches apart on the left side of the fortress, right behind the first laser barrier. You must destroy them because they protect three enemy planes sitting on the runway.

Fire into the laser barrier, until your shots clear. (Remember, this is the easiest way to judge your altitude.) As you clear the laser barrier, quickly bank left and dive. Keep firing your missiles. If you've timed it properly, the two green cannons will explode. Then move to the right and get those three enemy planes sitting on the runway.

**Grey Ground Cannons.** After you've flown over the first wall of the floating fortress, dive down and bank right. If you move

quickly, you'll be in position to hit a radar tower (1000 points) and a cannon (200 to 500 points). Continue to fly ahead until you see a low, two-tiered brick wall. Hurdle the wall and fire away. Directly in your path (and soon destroyed, right?) are a few fuel tanks. Now comes the tricky part. Still off screen—but directly ahead—are two grey ground cannons, waiting to shoot at your jet. They're about an inch apart on the screen. If you fire quickly and move your jet from right to left, you can destroy both the grey cannons before they hit you with their missiles. If you panic and don't think you can fire, remember that all enemy fire in Zaxxon—including the homing missiles—travels in a straight line. You can avoid being hit by the grey cannons by positioning your jet between their missiles.

**Alternate Method of Attacking Grey Cannons.** Here's a hint for gaining some extra points: After you've gotten over that first brick wall—and hopefully blasted the radar screens and one cannon—shift the fighter control stick hard left. Now, instead of flying over



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that other two-tiered row, you're in position to go around it. If you're quick enough you can destroy those two fuel tanks in front of the low wall. Then fire ahead at the tank beyond the wall. Shift the stick quickly to the right, fly over or between the crater-like underground missile silos, and in front of you are the two grey cannons. This time you'll be moving left to right. If you've been firing quickly, the grey cannons become easy prey.

## Be Prepared!

**Imagine Yourself in the Cockpit.** If you imagine that you're in the cockpit of your jet, you'll be more cautious, and less likely to take unnecessary chances. Don't be greedy. Many expert video game players are successful because they use this method to combat the greed element. (In fact, the TV commercials for Zaxxon give the impression of being in the cockpit!) Imagining yourself in the cockpit makes you more cautious, and will lead to higher scores.

**The Humpty-Dumpty Syndrome.** Like the egg in the nursery rhyme, it's dangerous for you, too, to be found sitting on the wall or in Zaxxon's laser barrier. Don't be over-anxious when trying to clear or hurdle the brick walls and laser barriers. If you drop down too soon, your jet will land on the wall and turn bright red (maybe from embarrassment?), and you'll lose that plane. Make sure that you've cleared the obstruction before you start your dive. Even expert players can get over-anxious and lose a plane due to the Humpty-Dumpty Syndrome.

**Keep Your Hand on the Fighter Control Stick.** Sometimes it's a natural reaction to release the stick after you've cleared an obstruction or made a good hit on the enemy. Don't do it! Keep your hand on the stick! You might need to make a last-second adjustment to clear that barrier. Often, you will destroy an enemy target, then release your hand—and in the middle of your celebration, another

enemy will destroy your jet. Keep your hand on the control stick at all times.

**Don't Glide Into Targets.** Often you can get so involved with what targets are ahead of your jet that you forget to clear the obstructions. It's not uncommon to see a pilot get into position to strafe a few fuel tanks up ahead, only to glide into an enemy plane sitting on the runway. Even though you'll get 50 points for destroying the enemy plane, it's not worth losing a jet. Make sure your path is clear before attacking targets entering the screen.

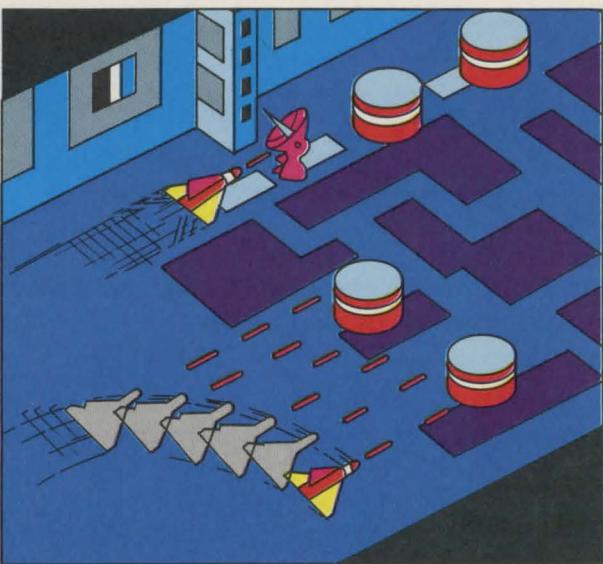
# Advanced Flight School

Having learned the basics, it's time to enroll in Advanced Flight School. In this chapter we'll build on the skills you learned in Flight Training School, and teach you how to improve your scoring in Zaxxon.

## Strafing

Beginning Zaxxon players are content to survive the flight through the enemy's fire. But now that you've reached Advanced Flight School, it's time to try for most of the targets on the screen. As you guide your jet through the floating fortress, keep in mind that experienced pilots aim for as many enemy targets as possible. If you've practiced diving, climbing and banking, then you're ready to learn the art of strafing.

There are two methods of strafing that seem to produce big scores in Zaxxon. The first method is called "fanning," and is used when a number of enemy fortifications are grouped together, but not in a straight line. For example, in the center section of the floating fortress, beyond the laser barriers, are three fuel tanks positioned in a triangular arrangement with a grey ground cannon on



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the left. Your jet, now at a high altitude after outmaneuvering the laser barrier, must make a pass at these fortifications.

Beginning players will dive down, hit one or two fuel tanks, and then climb to get over the next brick wall. Advanced pilots, now comfortable "flying" the jet, can use the fanning method. After clearing the laser barrier, push the fighter control stick forward and to the *right*. This causes the jet to bank right. Now comes the tricky part. As soon as the jet is in line with the rightmost fuel tank, slide the control stick towards the left, and begin firing. Your jet passes, from right to left, in front of the three fuel tanks. The missiles from the jet *fan out* and blow up the three fuel tanks.

So far, so good ... but keep going. Let's get that grey ground cannon. Still firing and moving to your left, blast the cannon. The tall brick wall looms ahead, but don't panic. As you shoot at the grey ground cannon, don't wait to see if you've hit it. (If you've practiced firing the missiles, the cannon will be destroyed.) Instead, pull back quickly on the fighter control stick. If you follow this plan of fanning, you can rack up points for the three fuel tanks (900 points

total) and the grey ground cannon (200 or 500 points). Also, by quickly pulling up on the control stick, your jet can fly safely through the opening in the next brick wall. Use the fanning method when the enemy fortifications are clustered.

#### MISSILE FIRING HINT

As mentioned above, better players don't have to wait to see if their shot has hit the target. They move quickly to the next targets. Have confidence. Once you've mastered Zaxxon's depth perception and firing system, your shots *will* hit their targets. And don't sit around enjoying your triumph—move your jet to the other areas of the screen that are still full of enemy fortifications.

The second strafing method is called "the machine-gun method." Use this one when two or more enemy targets are set up in a straight row, one behind the other. The trick here is to fire quickly and then fly off even before the first shot hits its target. For example, minutes before you combat the armored robot, your jet crosses over a brick wall and into an area containing three fuel tanks, all in a row. Push the flight control stick forward, and dive towards the surface of the floating fortress. Now fire three quick shots, directly in front of the first fuel tank. Before the first missile hits, pull back on the stick to climb over the next brick wall. As you climb through the opening, your missiles will be hitting their targets below—giving you another 900 points.

#### Flick Your Stick

At this point in your training you should be very skillful at controlling the flight of the jet. Now it's time to learn a helpful hint on how to make slight adjustments in the flight. Sometimes after attacking the enemy targets, your jet is only a little out of line for the next assault. At times like this, remember to "flick your stick."

Just tap the fighter control stick in the direction needed to correct the jet's flight.

For example, imagine you've just completed a fanning strafe on the enemy. Ahead lies one of those low, two-tiered brick walls. Since you had to dip to the lowest possible altitude for the attack, your jet will not clear the wall. (Of course, you realize this after seeing a few test shots explode near the top of the wall!) Above the wall is one of those annoying laser barriers. What can you do? If you pull back on the control stick too much, you'll hit the barrier and explode. It's time to flick your stick. *Tap* the fighter control stick towards you. This will cause the jet to rise just slightly, and is usually enough to clear the brick wall and still get you underneath the laser barrier.

### Flying Through the Missile Silos

Located throughout the floating fortress are numerous craters which house the underground missiles. Beginners like to fly away from the craters because they never know when a missile will rise up. Even though the silo emits a smoke cloud seconds before the missile arrives, there's rarely enough time to get out of the way.

You'll never become a flying ace if you always fly away from the enemy! You must learn to be aggressive. The missile silos often surround valuable enemy targets such as radar towers and planes on the runways. Attack the enemy positions. Rack up those points. Don't let the threat of a few underground missiles stop you.

It *is* possible to fly your jet *between* the missile craters. Here's the trick. Keep your jet at the lowest possible altitude, by pushing the fighter control stick forward. The lower the jet, the smaller it appears on the screen. The smaller it appears, the harder it is for a missile to hit it. Once you've gotten the jet down, carefully maneuver between the craters towards those enemy fortifications. Fire away and the points are added to your score. Let the missiles rise up from the fortress floor—if you've been careful, they won't hit your jet.

### Enemy Fighter Jet—Advanced Attack Method

When you start getting good at Zaxxon, it's time to improve your score in the enemy fighter jet dogfight. In basic training, you learned that to survive you should stay at maximum or minimum altitudes. But to get top scores during this part of the round, the expert players have developed a method of attack that works at *all* altitudes. The enemy fighter jets attack in the same pattern every time. First, four jets sweep down from the top left to the bottom right of the screen. They appear small because they are at low altitudes.

Here's the secret to hitting all four: As soon as the dogfight sequence begins, drop your jet down. Quickly glance at the altimeter



ter on the left of the screen. Keep your jet  $1\frac{1}{2}$  sections above the "low" reading on the altimeter. Then look back to the screen. The background is a mixture of stars and planets. Near the bottom of the screen, in the middle, is a light blue planet, about the size of a dime. Aim your jet at this planet and begin firing. Believe it or not, you'll be in a perfect position to hit all four jets as they sweep towards the lower right. In addition, you'll see a small white "X" appear just beyond the nose of your jet. This is Zaxxon's secret way of telling you that you're at the same altitude as the enemy jets.

After you've hit the four jets, bring your plane up higher. Three more enemy jets enter the screen from the top right. As soon as you see that white "X" at the nose of your ship, aim and fire. Keep firing as quickly as possible and you should hit most of the enemy fleet. But remember, always pretend that you're sitting in the cockpit of your plane. That will keep you from being careless, and will help you to survive and go on to attack other enemy fortifications.

## Combat Ace School

### Wiping Out the Entire Enemy Jet Fleet

In the previous chapter you learned how to destroy most of the enemy jet fleet. Now you'll discover the secret to winning the entire dogfight. Remember—you must hit 20 enemy jets (including the ones on the ground) to earn the 1000-point bonus. Here's how: Repeat the first two steps from the previous chapter (see page 27). (First fly low and hit the four jets, then come up for the next three.) If you got the three jets that were on the ground, you're now half-way towards the bonus. To get the other 10 jets, move your jet as high as it can go, near the center of the screen. This way you can quickly move left or right towards an enemy jet. Wait until the enemy jet reaches its top altitude (its cockpit will become a white bubble), then fire away. Again, don't wait around for the hit. Keep moving aggressively towards other jets and repeat the procedure.

Sometimes you can use the fanning strafe method. For example, if three enemy jets enter the screen simultaneously, they often reach their top altitudes one after the other. Starting with the top-most jet, fire and move towards the other two. Your missile fire will fan out, blowing up the three jets in succession.

The trick is to be aggressive. Keep moving, firing and returning your jet to the center of the screen. This keeps you in position for the next wave of enemy jets. If you follow this method, you'll soon become a regular member of the "1000-Point Bonus Club."

### Drawing Out the Homing Missile

The homing missile is worth 200 points, if you hit it six times. Why pass up these points? Expert players purposely fly at high altitudes over the fortress, to lure the missile out. When it appears, begin firing but also drop your altitude. The homing missile will also drop down. Hit it six times and you destroy it. If, however, you miss, or only hit it a few times, you're now low enough to quickly duck underneath, without it hitting you.

### Combined Strafing Method

At one point in the latter part of each round, there's a place in the floating fortress where three fuel tanks are flanked by two grey ground cannons. As you clear the brick wall leading to this section, get ready for combat. Once clear of the wall (Remember—Beware of the Humpty-Dumpty Syndrome!), push the flight control stick quickly to the right. As soon as you're in line with the grey cannon, reverse your direction while pushing on the stick. Now your jet should be banking and diving right to left. Start fanning your shots. As you approach the three fuel tanks in the middle of the fortress, hesitate for a second. Quickly fire three shots at the tanks in a machine-gun strafe. Then move the stick back to the left and get that last cannon. Once that's out of the way, shift the stick back to the right and fly through the opening in the brick wall.

It sounds complicated, but if you're going to be a Combat Ace you must learn to get as many points as possible. It'll cost you a few planes to master this combined strafing method, but once you've learned the secret, you can enjoy some of the most exciting and satisfying moments possible in any video game.

## The Protected Radar Tower

Just beyond the laser barrier, in the middle of the fortress, is a radar tower. As you approach the laser barrier, try to position your jet to the immediate right of the upcoming radar tower. Once you clear the barrier, drop down quickly, bank left, and commence firing. If you've waited for the correct moment, you'll be able to explode the radar tower just before your jet passes over it. (Of course, if you miss the tower, your plane crashes into it. You get the 1000 points, but lose a plane.) If you're successful, your momentum will



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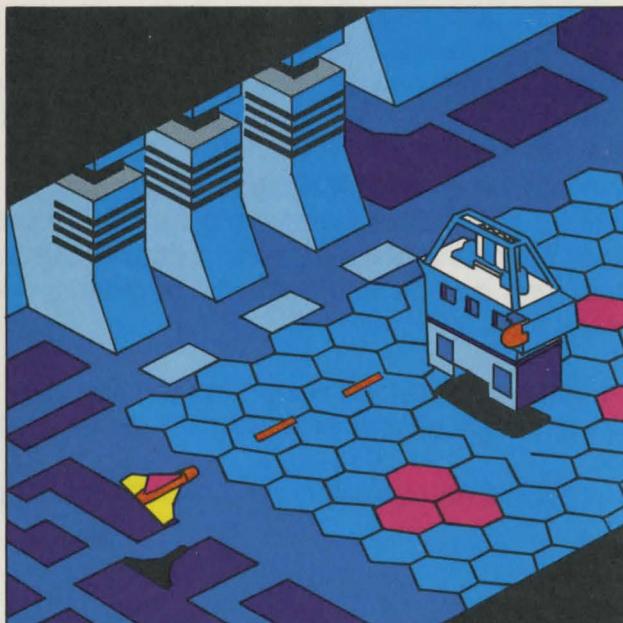
carry you towards the two green ground cannons. Fire twice, blow up the cannons, and then proceed to get the now unprotected three enemy fighter jets sitting on the runway.

This is possibly the hardest task in Zaxxon. The radar tower is so close to the laser barrier that unless the maneuver is performed perfectly, you'll crash into the barrier or into the tower itself. It's a challenge—but Combat Aces look forward to challenges!

## The Armored Robot

Battling the armored robot is like the classic shoot-out in a Western movie. At this point, the last remaining enemy is the deadly armored robot, to whom beginners and even advanced players often lose all their jets.

The robot appears floating on top of a confusing "beehive" pattern of hexagonal blocks. It enters from the extreme right of the



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screen. Your jet can only fly up to the beginning of the beehive pattern, so there you are, forced to fire at a distant target. If you don't score six direct hits on the robot's homing missile, it's soon propelled towards your plane. As the missile flies, you can still blow it up, but it's difficult to hit a moving target. (Also, if you hit the homing missile as it flies towards you, it's only worth 200 points. If you explode it while it's still in the robot you earn 1000 points.)

But if you've gotten this far, there's a little secret you deserve to know—a guaranteed way to destroy the armored robot. Fly your jet until you reach the beginning of the beehive pattern. Now, shift the fighter control stick so that your jet is between the second and third hexagonal block from the left. Don't pay attention to the approaching robot yet. (He'll be making squawking noises to distract you.) Quickly glance at the altimeter on the left side of the screen, and raise or lower your jet until the reading is about  $2\frac{1}{4}$  units above the lowest altitude. Look back at the menacing armored robot. It's time for quick firing. Blast away. As you notice the robot beginning to shift towards *your* left, move your jet in the same direction. If you've followed this plan, you'll begin to make direct hits on the robot's missile. You know when you've scored a hit because the robot glows red!

Keep shifting towards the left. If you've been accurate, the homing missile will soon explode, destroying the armored robot with it. Now you can relax as you see the robot dissolve into tiny red pieces that spray over the screen. That bit of theatrics is worth 1000 points.

Take a deep breath and get ready. Soon you're back in deep space, flying towards yet another exciting and challenging round of Zaxxon.

Congratulations! You now qualify as a Zaxxon "Combat Ace!"



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